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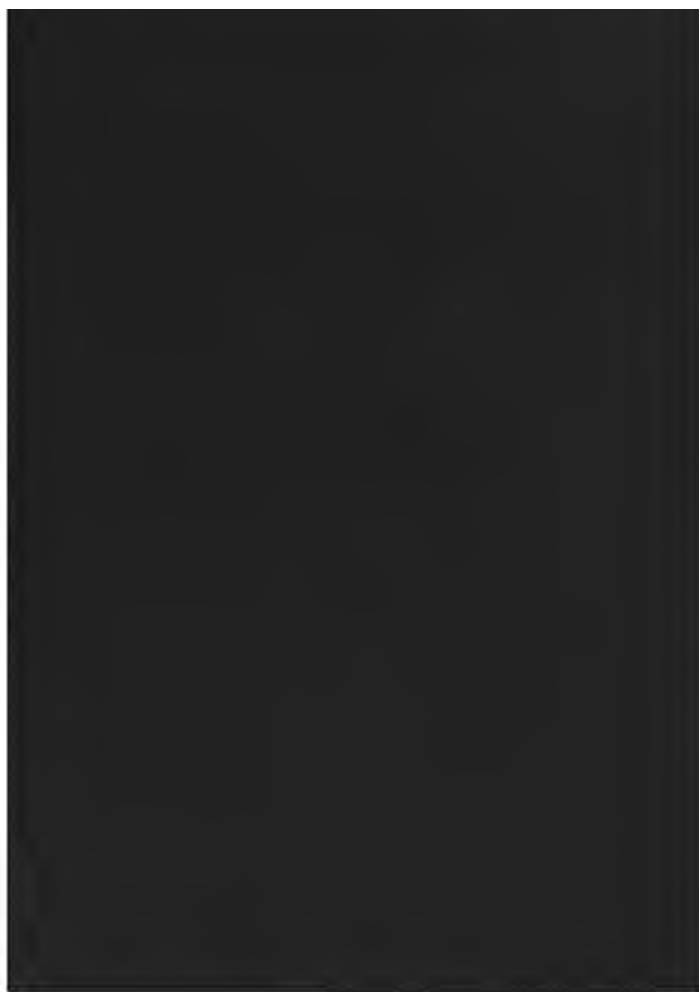
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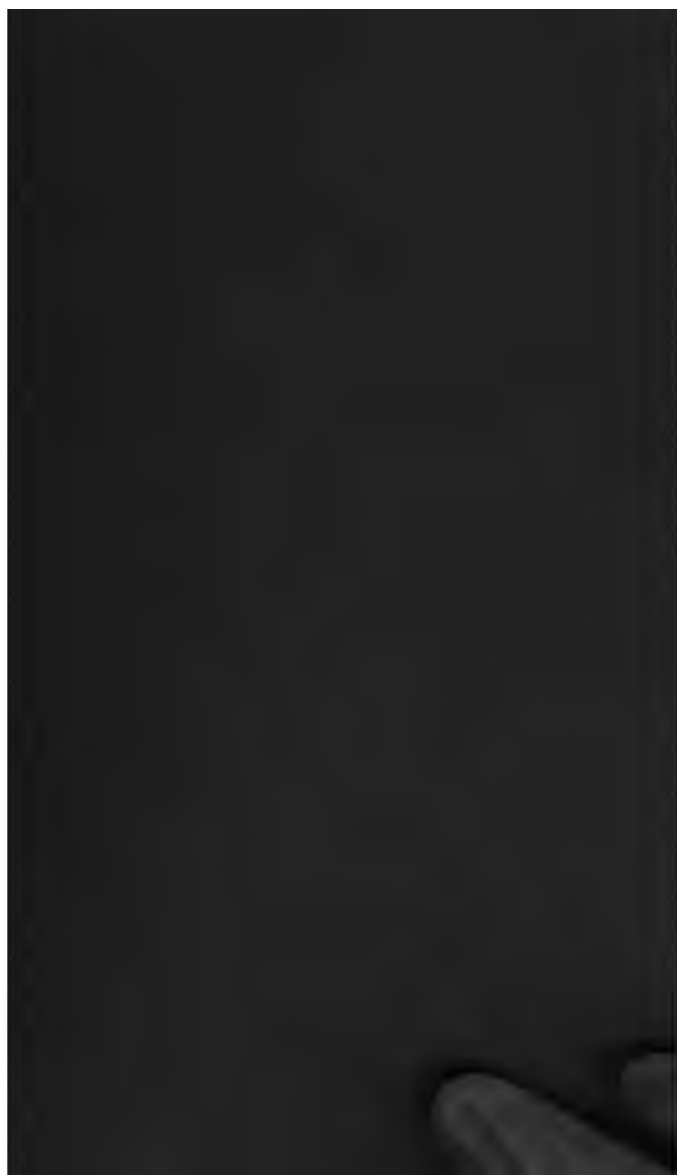
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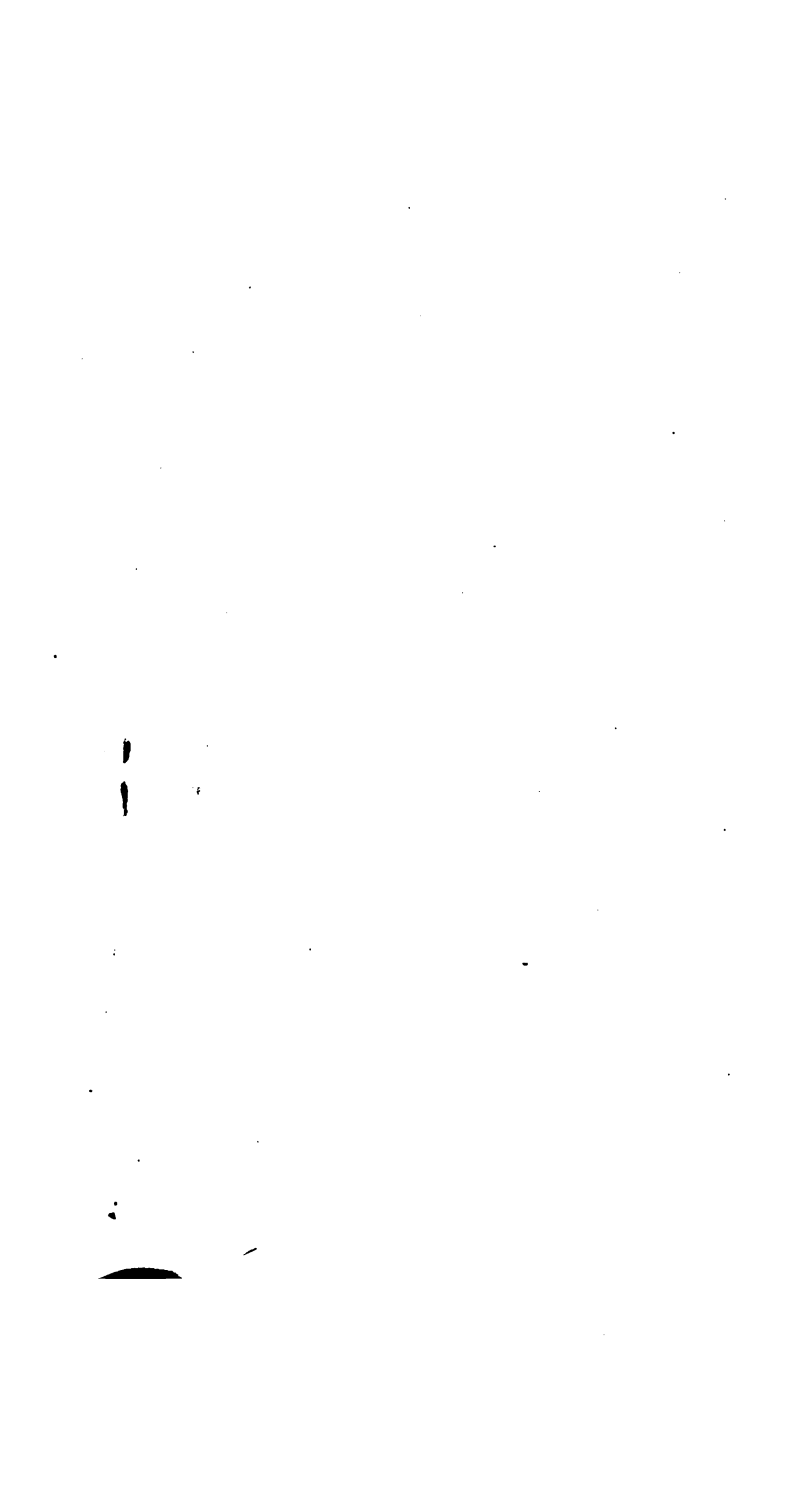
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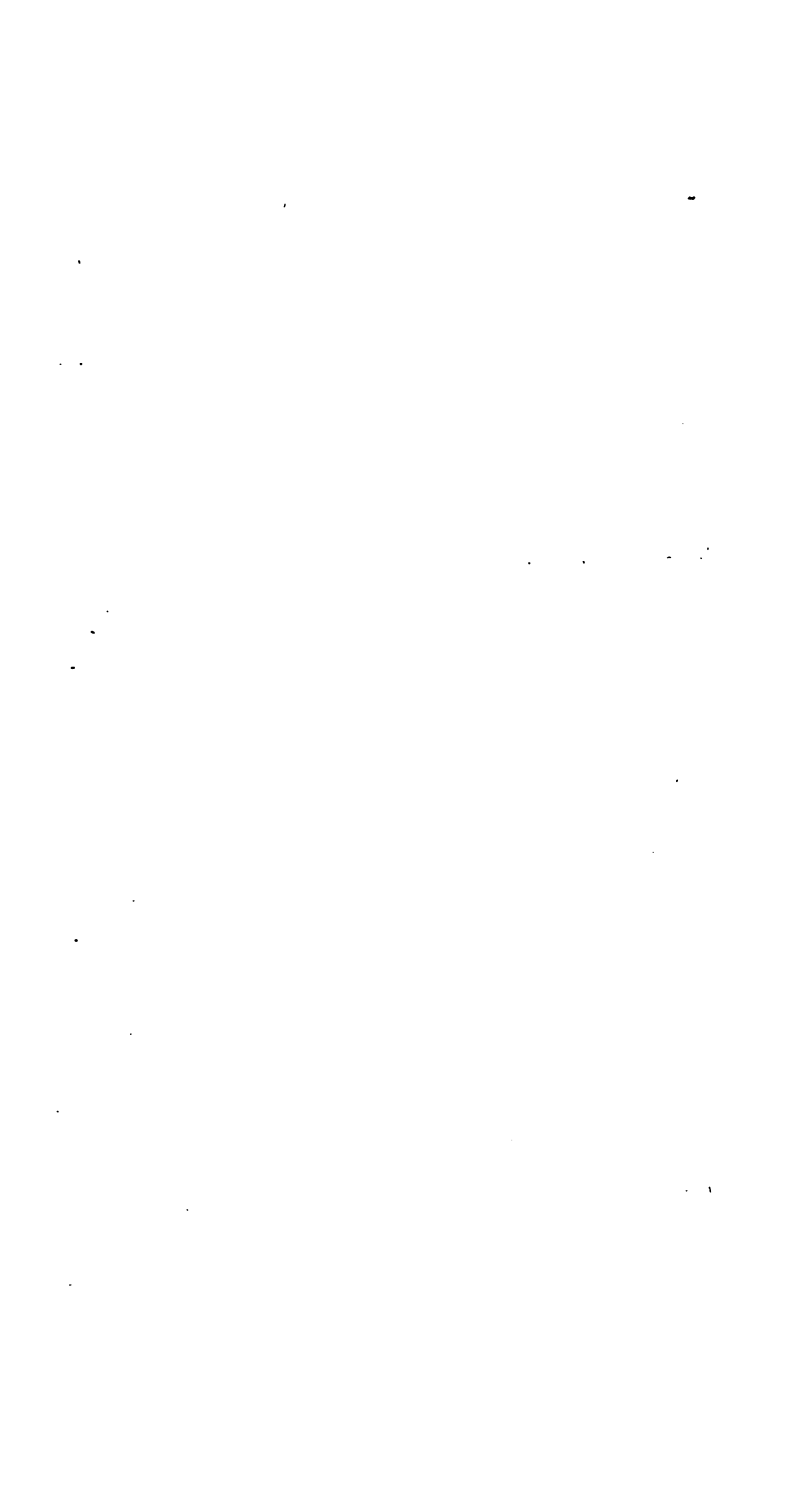
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IRISH ❖ **S**ONGS ❖

AND

Guard Room Rhymes,

BY

HENRY O'CUIRC.



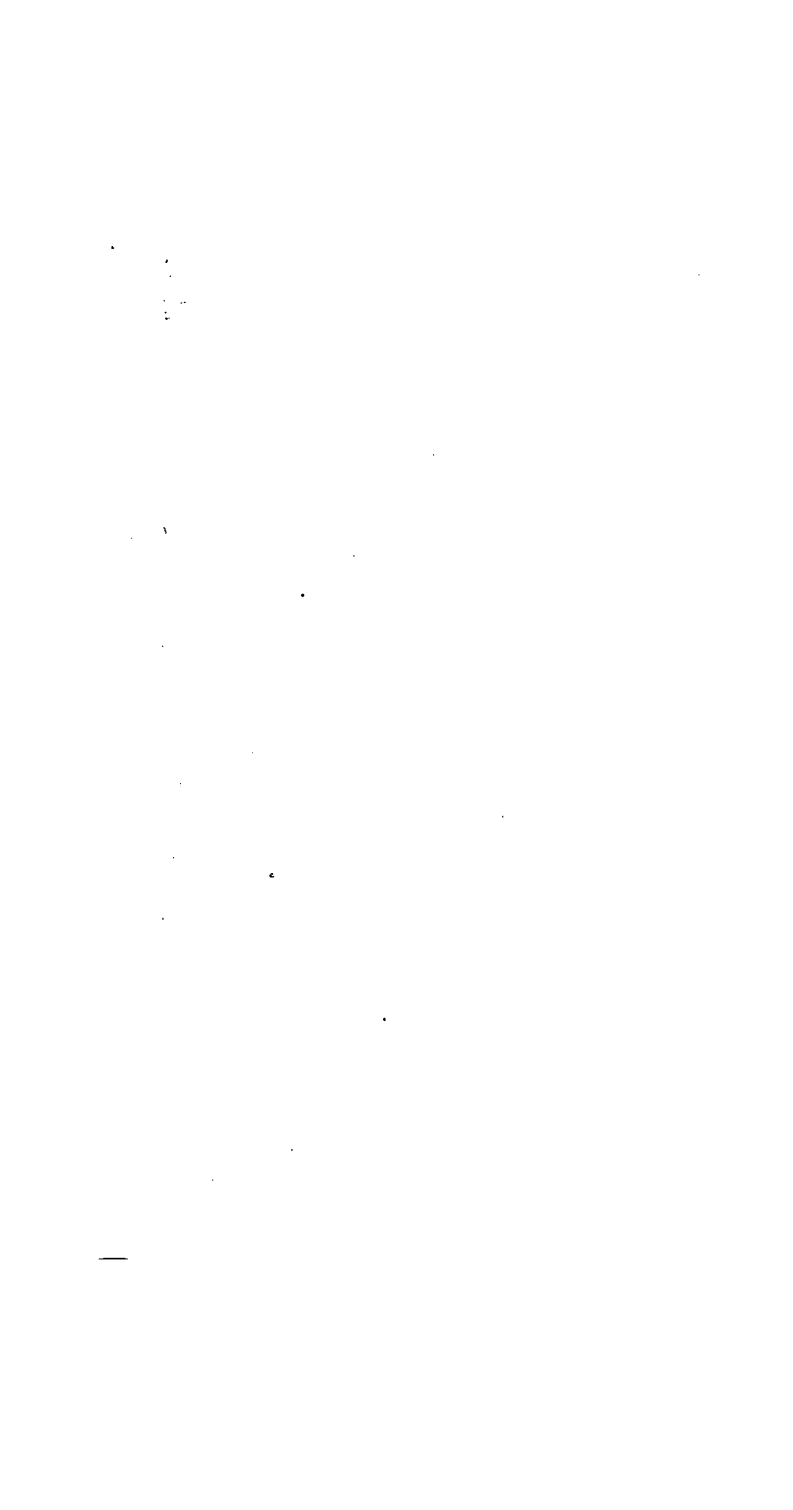
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'T is pleasant sure to see one's name in print,
"A book's a book, although there's nothing in 't."

Byron.



MIGHTY BROTHERS.

**Mighty brothers, on the mountain,
You who in the sunlight be,
If the light could
Pierce the dark wood,
Send a ray of light to me.**

**Mighty brothers, on the mountain,
If you should my wild notes hear,
Say a kind word
Of a wild bird,
Whom no rays of sunlight cheer.**


BUT LIST.

But list the jingle of my rhyme,
'T is pleasant to the ear,
Though some sad verse may claim a sigh,
And some sad tale a tear.

Ah ! if you knew the singer's heart ;
How trembles it with fear,
Lest harshly judging, on your part
You lend a careless ear.

You could not crush a rose ere first
It's sweet scent you inhale ;
Oft has a singer's heart near burst
When none would hear his tale.

Then list the jingle of my rhyme,
'T is pleasant to the ear ;
Though some sad verse may claim a sigh,
And some sad tale a tear.



HARP OF MY LAND.

O, light of my heart's devotion,
Dear harp of my land awake
And sing with thine old emotion !
The clouds of our winter break !

The sun of our hope is shining,
His rays to our hearts now steal ;
Forgot is the old repining
In the dawn of joy we feel.

But yet, lest to mournful numbers
My touch should thy chords awake,
Not a breath shall disturb thy slumbers,
For a cord in my heart would break.

I KNOW A LAND.

I know a land
Whose sea-girt strand
The waves kiss evermore ;
Where hearts are true,
And eyes are blue,
As sky which arches o'er.

I know a land
Where round towers stand
In ruin, grey, and hoar ;
In dim twilight
Of earth's first night
Is lost their ancient lore.

I know a land
Whose heroes grand
Are pinnacled in fame ;
Who fought for right
'Gainst tyrant might,
And won a deathless name.

I know the land
At God's command,
First shone from mists of morn
An ocean queen,
Whose mantle green
Her sea-girt strand adorn.



THE OLD LAND.

And have you seen the old land,

Acushla, tell to me ?

For seven and twenty years have passed

Since first I crossed the sea ;

And is the green

As brightly seen

As when, in days of yore,

I viewed it from the vessel's deck

Which bore me from its shore ?

And come you from the old land,

Acushla, tell to me ?

For in this country cold and strange

It is my fate to be.

Are hearts as pure,

Does love endure,

As in the days of old ?

Or has the ancient spirit fled,

And have their hearts grown cold ?

Then tell me of the old land,
Acushla, gra Machree?
And bring the picture to my mind
Those eyes shall never see.
And to my ear
Like music clear
Your words shall sound to me;
And I shall think I'm back again
Once more across the sea.



COLLEEN OG.

1.

I stand beside the holy well,
Colleen og, Colleen og ;
Once more I hear the vesper bell,
Colleen og, Colleen og.
I lean upon the old grey stone,
With trembling lips I sigh and moan.
Colleen og, gra gall machree ;
Colleen og no more I'll see.

2.

This is the spot where first we met,
Colleen og, Colleen og ;
The old grey stone your name bears yet,
Colleen og, Colleen og.
I've come from far across the sea
Our trysting place once more to see.
Colleen og, gra gal machree ;
Colleen og no more I'll see.

3.

'T was here we often sat to rest,
Colleen og, Colleen og ;
While leaned your head upon my breast,
Colleen og, Colleen og.
I little thought our parting near
When last I whispered in your ear :
Colleen og, gra gal machree ;
Colleen og no more I'll see.

4.

'T was here you vowed to be my wife,
Colleen og, Colleen og ;
The light has faded from my life,
Colleen og, Colleen og.
The world has got no joys for me ;
My heart is in the grave with thee ;
Colleen og, gra gal machree ;
Colleen og no more I'll see.

SLAVES ARISE !

Hark to that sound which strikes the ear,
Let tyrants tremble when they hear ;
'T is freedom's voice, borne on the breeze,
In clarion tones, across the seas.

Slaves arise !

Who can coward be ?
They must fight who would be free ;
Let freedom reign from sea to sea,
And liberty our watchword be.

Slaves arise !

The bonfires wait the flaming brand
To flash the signal through the land,
When gallant hearts, with sword in hand,
Shall leap upon our island's strand.

Slaves arise !

The ruins on yon river side
Proclaim your grandsires' power and pride ;
Shall bards in song your names deride,
As craven hearts their race belied ?
Slaves arise !

The wild geese flight will homeward be,
Their vanguard now comes o'er the sea,
Brave hearts will find them company,
And greet them with "Caed mail failthe."
Slaves arise !



THE EPITAPH.

The time is now fast coming, coming round,
We soon shall write his epitaph, my boys ;
And at the thought brave hearts, brave hearts
will bound,

We soon shall write his epitaph, my boys.
The sunburst soon will wave o'er Tara's hill,
When Irish hearts shall give responsive thrill ;
And then we 'll write his epitaph, my boys ;
And then we 'll write his epitaph, my boys.

His words shall be our trumpets, trumpets sound ;
We soon shall write his epitaph, my boys,
Which in each Irish heart an echo found ;
We soon shall write his epitaph, my boys.
When in the van old Erin takes her place,
And freedom's light shall shine on every face.
O, then we 'll write his epitaph, my boys ;
O, then we 'll write his epitaph, my boys.

FONTENOY.

'T was on the field of Fontenoy,
The fight was nearly done,
When Erin's exiled sons beheld
The boastful Frenchmen run.
"O, let us go," the exiles cried,
While fast their salt tears ran ;
"Unfurl our own green flag again,
"And let it lead the van."

"We shall bear it,
High we'll rear it,
Lift the green again ;
Chains have known it,
Tyrants torn it,
We are Irishmen."

In vain the exile's prayer was made
While yet a hope remained,
The jealous Frenchman held them back,
While fast his glory waned.
"Not yet, not yet," he madly cried,
"For win this fight I can,
"And soon your flag will wave aloft,"
When shouts came from the van.
We will bear it, &c.

"Now let us go," St. Ruth, he cried,
When hopeless seemed the fight ;
"The glory of fair France is gone,
"Your men in hopeless flight."
"You now may go," the Frenchman cried,
While fast his soldiers ran,
"Hurrah ! our green flag waves aloft,
And now it leads the van."
We will bear it, &c.

Like tigers bounding on their prey,
The Irish line swept on ;
With bloodless cheek, and flashing eye,
They sprang the foe upon.
“Back, back, we go,” the Saxon cried,
Through ranks the rumour ran ;
“’Tis Erin’s green flag waves aloft,
“Her sons shout in the van.”

We will bear it, &c.

And when the desp’rate fight was o’er,
And conquered was the foe,
The exiles leant upon their swords,
And wept for those laid low.
“But soon in our own land,” they cried,
While fast their salt tears ran,
“We shall unfold our own green flag,
“And when it leads the van.”

We will bear it, &c.

GARRY OWEN.

Mid the bustle and stir,
And restless beat
Of hurrying feet
In a London street ;
Mid the dust and glare,
And heated air ;
While faces go past
Which are full of care ;
Familiar sounds burst on my ear
That ever to my heart are dear ;
And though its on an organ ground
Wherever Irish hearts are found,
'T will cheer them with its lively tone,
My blessing on you, Garry Owen.

And as the tune my fancies led,
These are the words I thought it said :

TO THE AIR OF GARRY OWEN.

O, 'tis life and 'tis joy
Speaks in every tone,
It will banish old care
With his sigh and his moan ;
And a fresh seed of joy
In your heart will be sown,
When you hear the glad strains
Of sweet Garry Owen.

Played o'er my grave
When I am dead,
'Twill stir my heart
In its earthen bed ;
And if not to God
My spirit has flown,
I will rise to the tune
Of sweet Garry Owen.

A SHAMROCK.

I hold a shamrock in my hand,
Which came from o'er the sea ;
And many a tale of Granuale
This shamrock tells to me.

It comes from those that I love best,
Who live in old Ireland ;
My tears I ween, have made its green
And threefold leaves expand.

How poor the land, 'twill not refuse
A place my bones to rest,
Or bear a message to my own
Loved island in the west.

And if some friendly heart now list,
This favour I would crave :
A shamrock bring from old Ireland,
And plant it on my grave.

RHAPSODY.

THE SOUTH WIND.

Where the nodding bulrush bends,
Where the stream its music lends,
Dragon fly, in golden sheen,
Silver trout in flashes seen ;
There reclining castles fair
Build I in the summer air.

O the rosy tints of morn,
O the fancy newly born ;
Listen to this song of mine,
Wild dogrose and Eglantine.

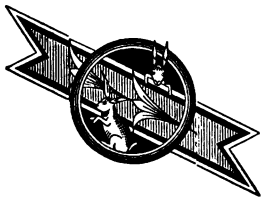
Bulrush listen,
Hush the rill.

Sweet balmy south wind,
 Breathe not of sorrow ;
Thy sweet breath should sob not,
 The sun shines to-morrow.
Fear not the day close,
 Still be a rover ;
Sing thy sweet monotone
 Over and over.
When in thine evening flight
 Met thou the billow,
Bared he his heaving breast
 Soft for thy pillow.
And while thou wert pausing
 With mad leaping caress,
He snatched the sweet perfume
 Of cytron and cypress.
Sunk on his western bed,
 Purple and amber,
Wroth was thy Sunlove,
 His glance made thee sombre.

THE SOUTH WIND.

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Sweet balmy south wind,
 Breathe not of sorrow ;
Thy sweet breath should sob not,
 The sun shines to-morrow.
Fear not the day close,
 Still be a rover ;
Sing thy sweet monotone
 Over and over.



SUMMER NIGHT.

'T is summer night, how sweet the air
Thy silvery laugh its pinions bear ;
The harp's deep throb, the fairies' fright,
Where nods the rose in pale moonlight.

I see thee in the dance, love,
I sigh to flowers around,
Till sink their heads
On perfumed beds,
And sleep to music's sound.

But look you from the casement,
But give one witching glance ;
Show but the face, smiles interlace,
With joy the lilies dance.

I'll tell my love, the flowers,
I'll tell the blushing rose,
Till winds of morn shall kiss them,
And bright the day dawn glows.

RHAPSODY.

JOY AND MELANCHOLY MORN, NOON, NIGHT.

MELANCHOLY MORN.

Behold, again, the morn,
 The hateful sun now glows,
 While to the earth in scorn
 A few cold rays he throws.
 Again, the weary wish
 For noon, which seems so far ;
 And rest that won't refresh,
 If thought unbolts her bar.

NOON.

How weary is the noontide,
 E'en time must be asleep ;
 So grows the hour to expanse wide,
 His laggard scythe should reap.
 Now hope, with whispers lying,
 Sings praises of the night ;
 When thought's last sigh in dying,
 Shall sorrow's blossom blight.

NIGHT.

Now comes at last the end,
Day's pilgrimage is o'er,
And hearts that aching bend,
Lay down their burdens sore.
Then haste thee wished-for slumber,
To presage it be thine ;
When days shall cease to number,
And stars shall cease to shine.

JOY—MORNING.

How bright the sun this morn,
How fresh the new-born day,
While jewelled drops adorn
Each leaf, and bough, and spray.
Once more the glad, unheed
Of moments flying fast,
Nor thought of time who'll speed
The new morn like the last.

NOON.

I greet the sun with rapture,
And try to catch his rays
Like a child who fain would capture
The light which blinds its gaze.
How glorious is his beaming,
Like a warrior in his might ;
From off whose shield comes streaming
The broken darts of light.

NIGHT.

While stars which heaven encumbers
Melodious converse keep ;
While fills the air with murmurs,
I'll lay me down and sleep.
And o'er me in my slumbers
Sweet children of the night
Still sing your joyful numbers
In flashing tones of light.

WHERE SHALL I FIND THE PEACE I
CRAVE?

Where shall I find the peace I crave,
In serried ranks, beside the brave ;
While war's dread banner o'er us wave,
Shall I then find the peace I crave ?

Or in the senate's sounding hall,
Speak magic words, which shall enthrall
A nation's hopes to sink or save,
Shall I then find the peace I crave ?

Or shall I wear the courtier's smile,
And lie and crouch with many a wile,
And think each fellow-man a knave,
Shall I then find the peace I crave ?

Or shall I wield the mighty pen,
In silence guide the thoughts of men,
Like oracle in Delphic cave,
Shall I then find the peace I crave ?

Or rosy Bacchus praise and sing,
And taste the joys which pleasure bring,
In Lethe's stream my soul to lave,
Shall I then find the peace I crave ?

Or up to heaven lift my gaze,
With self-inspired, ecstatic daze,
With hollow murmurs cry and rave,
Shall I then find the peace I crave ?

"Let not such ways thine heart enslave,"
"Your broken hopes their paths would pave,"
"Content to know the peace you crave,"
"Is only found within the grave."



A SONG, A SONG.

A song, a song, with glad refrain,
To cheer my heart and weary brain ;
Come sing, bring back my golden youth,
And banish care's dull gnawing tooth.

To sweep the dew off meadow grass,
And watch the gambolling leveret pass,
Where lurks the mushroom, newly born,
Yes, sing, O sing, the summer morn.

To wander in the mountain glen,
When night had hushed the voice of men;
And listen to its babbling theme,
Yes sing, O sing, the mountain stream.

To wander in the solemn shade,
Which oak, and ash, and elm have made ;
Where bubbling springs were icy cold,
Yes sing, O sing, the forest old.

To cling unto the bending mast,
While fast the furious waves rushed past ;
Or glide into the ocean cave,
Yes sing, O sing, the heaving wave.

To mount the steed with foam-flecked breast,
And skim the field with hunter's zest ;
Nor rest till night had stopped the race,
Yes sing, O sing, the glorious chase.

To listen to the minstrel's song,
While dropped his tears the cords among ;
Whose country's wrongs were keen and sharp,
Ah me ! no more, be still thine harp.



MOON LIGHT.

SUMMER NIGHT. NURSERY RHYME.

The earwig climbs the bulrush tall,
The toad sits on the brown puff ball,
The otter to his mate does call,
While bright the moon shines over all.

The bird of night her song has sung,
The hedgehog gropes dead leaves among,
And frogs in chorus give loud tongue,
While bright the moon shines over all.

The water-rat jumps in the stream,
And wakes the owl from long day dream ;
The fire-flies in the bushes gleam,
While bright the moon shines over all.

The water laps the river bank,
The willow leaves with dew are dank,
And poplars stand in ghostly rank,
While bright the moon shines over all.

The barge drifts with the silent tide,
The village clock midnight has cried,
The prowling fox has homeward hied,
While bright the moon shines over all.

The weary toiler takes his rest,
To rise at morn with eager zest ;
Let each one try to do his best,
And peace of God be with us all.




A SHIP SAILED OUT.

A ship sailed out, as morn came in,
She bore the dearest of his kin,
Whose soul shone clear, his eyes within,
And tide flowed out, and tide flowed in.

The day went out, and night came in,
His mother's face grew pale and thin,
She bolts and bars her door within,
While tide flowed out, and tide flowed in.

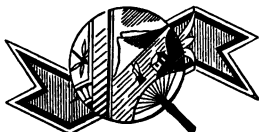
The winds are out, and night is in,
The sailor sleeps mid storms loud din,
Nor dreams of sorrow or of sin
While tide flows out, and tide flows in.

The rats rush out as waves rush in,
The leak is large, the planks are thin,
The cruel shark now shows his fin,
While tide flows out, and tide flows in.



The tide leaves high upon the shore
A message, which a bottle bore,
The ship now lies ten fathoms in,
While fish swim out, and fish swim in.

The mother's face grew wan and thin,
A pain shot through her heart within ;
That night her soul God's gate passed in,
While tide flowed out, and tide flowed in.



THE RAIN.

Now the wind plays a tune
On the high chimney tops,
And the rain jigs like mad
With titillating drops,
On the roof of my garret so high.

For a raft drifts along
In the midnight so black,
While a sailor lies choked
With the flying sea-wrack,
Says the rain on my garret so high.

For a woman she weeps,
And is wailing the dead,
By naught but dishonour
She can now get her bread,
Says the rain on my garret so high.

Now a fair woman's head
On the river mud lies,
And her wide-staring eyes
Look straight up to the skies,
Says the rain on my garret so high.

For a poor broken heart
Has got rid of its pain;
May her soul, by God's grace,
Be washed clear of all stain,
Says the rain on my garret so high.

That men may do evil,
Poor woman must fall,
But the sound of the Trumpet
Shall summon them all,
Says the rain on my roof near the sky.

THE VIOLIN.

I like the tune of gay Bassoon,
Or tinkling mandoline,
The breathing flute,
Or murmuring lute,
I love the violin.

I like the tone, of loud trombone,
Or trumpet's ringing din,
Sad saxophone,
Viola's moan,
I love the violin.

Sings sweet and low
The mild oboe,
It wakes a chord within.
The clarionet I like, but yet
I love the violin.

THE VIOLIN.

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The drum's alarms,
And call to arms,
 My spirit revels in ;
The cymbals' clash,
Drum's thunder crash,
 I love the violin.



MY VIOLIN.

The forest's hum,
The sad sea moan ;
The rolling orbs,
Diapason.
The lover's sigh,
The wail of sin,
I hear them in
My Violin.

The songs of fair
Gay Debonair ;
The sigh, deep sunk,
Of cow'led monk ;
The ancient song
Of Aeoline,
I hear them in
My Violin.

The good ship's groan

• Mid tempest blast ;

The song that 's sung

By creaking mast,

Cries to heaven

When waves rush in ;

I hear them in

My violin.

The mother's wail,

Whose son is slain

The stifled gasp

On battle plain ;

The cheers which bring

The victor in,

I hear them in

My Violin.

MY VIOLIN.

An Angel's voice,
The heart's own song ;
The soul's rejoice,
God's choir among.
Chords from heaven,
When souls pass in,
I hear them in
My Violin.



THY COLD HEART.

The red deer loves the mountain lake,
The south wind loves the sea,
The wild thrush loves the tangled brake,
The nimble hare the lea ;
But cold as depths of mountain lake,
When frost-bound is the lea,
Or Iceberg's cave,
Where breaks the wave,
Is thy cold heart to me.

The sunlight loves the diamond's flash,
The waves love wild winds free,
The lightning loves the thunder crash,
The wild rose loves the bee ;
But cold as phosphor light when breaks
The midnight wave at sea,
Or chill moonlight
Of winter night,
Is thy cold heart to me.

WHAT WOULD I DO ?

What would I do to prove my love ?

What is there I'd not dare ?

I'd take the bright star from the north,
To deck thy silken hair.

What would I do to prove my love ?

From heaven I'd pluck each gem,

Wrench from the sun his golden rays,
To make thy diadem.

What would I do to prove my love ?

Such glamour hath thy face,

That I would steal from stars the song
Which speed them on their race.

What would I do to prove my love ?

But put me to the test ;

I'll prove it, though I lose my soul
And hope of heavenly rest.

THE MOMENT FIRST.

The moment first our eyes did meet,
My heart went out to thee ;
Ah sure ! the thought came from above
That thou wert made for me.
And spake thine eye
Which shone so clear
In language of the soul,—
Come, take this heart,
Love claims the toll,
For it was made for thee.



FAREWELL MY LOVE.

My bark's white wings now court the breeze,
 The pilot scans the shore,
 And I shall bear on foreign seas
 A sad heart evermore.

Farewell my love, farewell my land,
 We ne'er shall meet again,
 For woman's vows are writ on sand,
 We ne'er shall meet again.

An exile from my native land
 I bid its shores adieu,
 And waft fond kisses to its strand,
 While tears obscure my view.

Farewell my love.

When high the southron cross shall rise
 Above the Spanish main,
 'T will speak of hope to tearful eyes
 And broken heart in vain.

Farewell my love.

THE TRUSTING HEART.

A lark sprang from his nest at dawn
Ere golden shone the east,
And roused from sleep the timid fawn
With rich harmonic feast ;
For love spoke loud within his breast,
And told the sun was nigh,
With bursting song on loving quest
He mounted to the sky.
Ah me ! poor trusting heart,
When love and hope depart.
Ah me !

The lark sank to his nest at eve
With sad and plaintive theme,
No more with joyous song to leave
And greet the day's first beam.

For envious clouds had kept the sun
Enshrouded from his view,
Though still he sung till day was done,
With trusting heart and true.
Ah me ! poor trusting heart,
When hope and love depart.
Ah me !



THE FAIR LADYE.

A knight rides out his castle gate,
 A soldier bold is he,
 He wafts a kiss to turret top,
 Where stands his fair ladye.
 Sing ho, a soldier brave and free,
 Sing ho, a fair ladye,
 For heart won't grieve
 When eye don't see,
 Sing ho, the fair ladye.
 The knight goes down in battle front,
 No braver knight could be ;
 A bolt has pierced his armour bright
 And let his spirit free.
 Sing ho, &c.
 A page now sings a love ditty,
 A winsome page is he,
 One arm is round a lute so free,
 And one the fair ladye.
 Sing ho, &c.

THE MINSTREL.

A minstrel sang a melody
 Beneath a casement high,
A pirate bold and brave was he,
 His sword hung on his thigh.
“My love, my life, I come for thee,
 Awake and fly with me ;
My bark now rides the moonlit sea,
 She only waits for thee.”

He sang for life his love should be,
 All peril was forgot ;
While maskèd forms with mystery
 The buttress angle sought.

My love, my life.


The bravo's steel has hushed the song
 Beneath that casement high,
While weeps a maid the live day long,
 And sobs with mournful sigh,—
“My love, my life, I come to thee,
 Ah me! Ah welladay!”
Came wafted o'er the moonlit sea,
 “Ah me! Ah welladay!”



THE DEATH OF THE ROSE.

The south wind came to woo
A rose who sleeping lay,
He sighed I'll love but you
For ever and a day.
My love, the day is long,
And night is far away,
The day, sweet love, is long,
And night is far away.

His murmurs woke the rose,
Who listened to his lay,
She sighed, till life will close
I'll love thee if thou 'lt stay.
My love, the day is long,
And night is far away,
The day, sweet love, is long,
And night is far away.



The wind fled o'er the sea,
When evening's chill came on,
The rose sighed woe is me,
In death song, like the swan.
A perfumed shell
Each petal fell,
Morn came—the rose was gone.



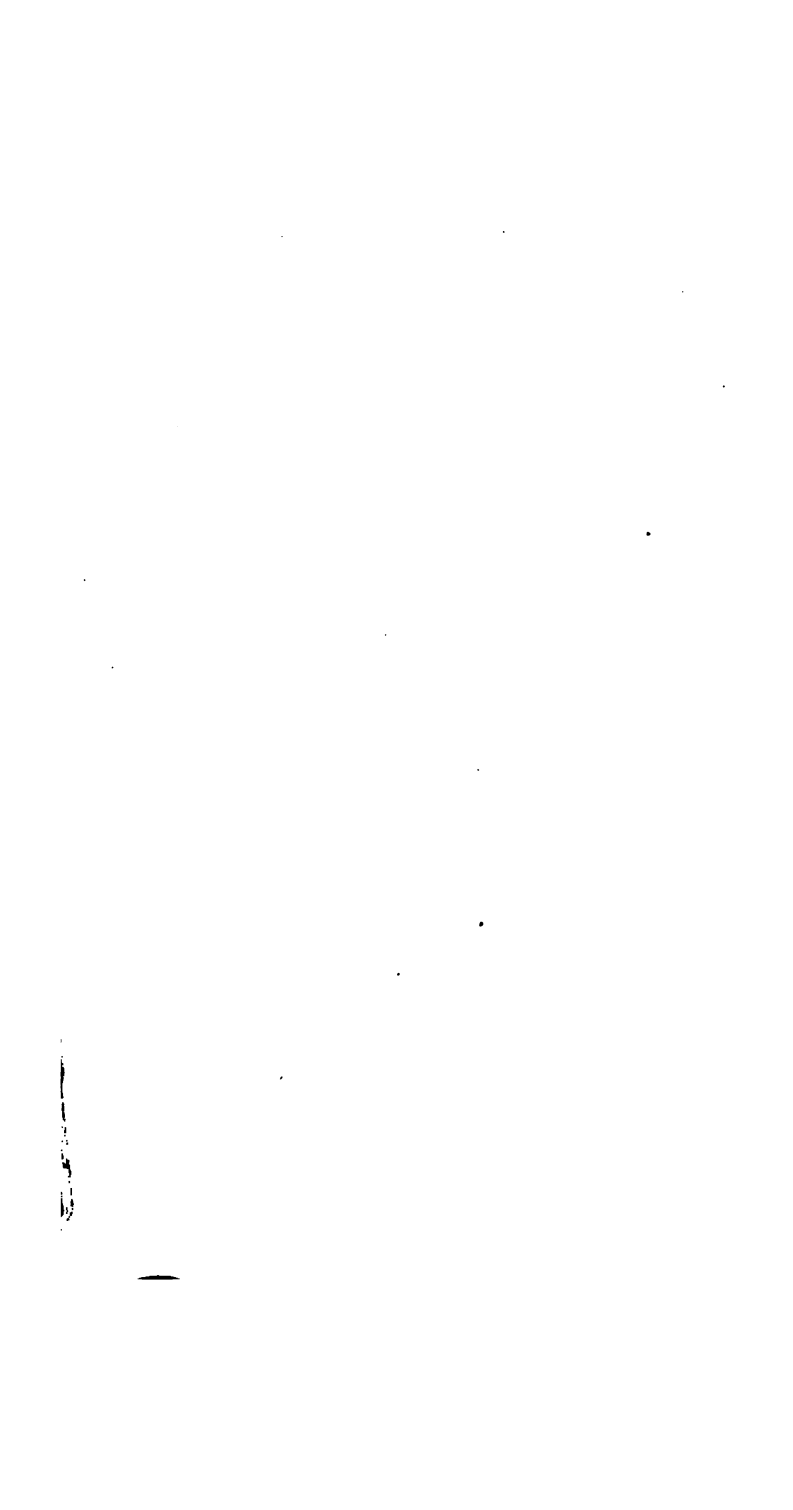
TO S. R. K.

Those words of thine
 Breathe thoughts divine,
 Stir heart of mine
 Like glorious wine.

You hold the light,
 Shines to my sight
 In waters bright,
 Of love the might.

Still hold the flame,
 Sans fear or shame,
 Immortal fame
 Shall sing thy name.

THE GUARD ROOM.



THE GUARD ROOM.

Bright burned the guard room fire,
And large the group which gathered round ;
Loud roared the wind which shook the door,
And ever and anon would stop the tale.
And made the young recruit to hold his breath,
Shift in his seat, glance round, and grow quite pale,
When told a ghostly yarn, which ever vouched as
true,
Yet strange, as paled his cheek the yarn more
ghastly grew.
And many a scarrèd face was there
Whose deep set lines and bronzed hue
Spoke loud of dangers past, and deeds of derring do.
Bare were the whitewashed walls,
Their only ornament a sword or gun
Left by some owner whose last watch was done ;
And on a level almost with the floor
The guard room bed, whose wooden pillow
Many a bayonet scratched initial bore.

Bright shone the medals on the sergeant's breast,
And when he spoke, attentive were the rest,
For he had fought in Russia, China, Hindostan,
And in forlorn hope the gauntlet ran ;
Gruff was his voice, his manner sharp,
His lightest word obeyed, without a growl or carp,
His was the task to poke the blazing fire,
Till roared the flame with loud and stormy ire ;
And when he made a joke, a loud guffaw
Proclaimed although the wit was bad his wish
 was law ;
Pleased was the group when he declared his part
Would be to tell the first tale, thus to make a start.
It was well known that he the wondrous charge
 had seen,
So, not to lose one word, the listeners forward lean ;
And when at times the flames to silence sank,
Outside was heard the sentry's tread and scabbard
 clank.
The sergeant told his tale of valour bold,
Which ne'er was equalled in the grandest days of
 old.

"Yes, I saw the charge.

From Chersonese hill side
Watched I that fatal ride,
Dread was the slaughter.

Standing behind my gun,
I was the number one,
Maude was my captain.

On came the light brigade,
Gaily as on parade
Heard we their laughter.

Lancer and light Dragoon,
Shining spur, bright Bridoon,
Proud was their canter.


Saxon and Celt were there,
Naught did they know of fear,
Some smoked tobacco.

Swept past in squadrons three,
Where was their goal to be?
None cared or questioned.

Broke from their canter proud,
Closed like a thunder cloud
Flashed down their lances.

Loud groaned our troop with dread
Though not a word was said,
Stopped we our breathing.

Far in the van his plume
Shone like a guide to doom,
Cardigan foremost.



Now spoke the cannon's voice,
Smote through the columns thrice,
Thick lay the wounded.

On swept the thunder cloud,
Now did we cry aloud,
Like dog held from rat.

Clutched I the wooden trail,
Clenched was my finger nail,
Deep made an indent.

Fast now the cannon spoke,
Melt they into the smoke,
Naught could we discern.

Silent the guns awhile,
We had begun to smile,
Out came a horseman.


Followed by two's and three's,
Sunk on their saddle trees,
Dying and wounded.

Holding their horses' mane,
Poor wounded men in pain,
Staggered and floundered.

Some with wild eyes and hair
Slashing the empty air,
Mad was their phrensy.

Lancer and light Dragroon,
Shattered lance, shorn plume,
Came back in couples.

Laughed we aloud with glee
When a dense Infantry
Followed them in squares.



Paused till they got in range,
Hoarse was the voice and strange
Which shouted out "Fire."

Looking along my gun,
Blood seemed to tinge the sun
When twanged the lanyard.

Crash ! through their squares it went,
Like corn their ranks were bent,
Straight was the furrow.

Mowed down the Muscovite,
Nor gave them chance of fight,
Death sent in showers.

Plied them with shot and shell
Till reeled their squares pell mell,
Cheered we like madmen.

Deep the revenge we took,
Scarce would the order brook
For to cease firing.

That saw I of the charge,
Honour and glory large,
Thus ends my story."



Loud were the bravoës which proclaimed the end
Of that fond tale, which to the heart does send
Of ev'ry soldier fast the blood, and rouses high the
 Briton's pride

Of those who fought the Muscovite
In Balaclava's ride.

But silent at the sergeant's side
A grim old soldier sat,
Who smoked his pipe in quiet,
And never joined in laughter loud or chat,
But looked into the circling flames
Which up the chimney rolled
With stolid and abstracted gaze
One sees in soldiers old.

The numbered buttons on his coat,
But more his dark green cuffs,
Proclaimed his corps in fighting first,
The famous old third Buffs
Now loud and eager were the calls
His story for to hear,

While thrice he lit his short black pipe,
And turned a stern deaf ear.
But nothing daunted, still they cried
With clamour long and loud ;
For stories of his famous corps
Were known to all the crowd.
The clamour grew, for well they knew
Beneath that visage grim
A soft kind heart in every part
Was owned by Irish Tim ;
For he was born where heath adorn
Old Galtimore's hill side ;
On better soldier in his prime
Ne'er could old Ireland pride.
At length, his pipe laid down,
And arms crossed on his breast,
Gave ample signs, received with joy,
Of yielding to the rest.
And when all pipes were lit,
By lights passed man to man,

He coughed and quickly cleared his throat,
And thus his tale began :—

“I don’t know any tale or yarn
Of gallant charge or ride,
I’ll tell to you a story short,
How one of the ould corps died.”



THE OLD SOLDIER'S STORY.

“Hould on now, while I tell you
Of a time when kicks and cuffs
Were more plentiful than pleasant
In the ranks of the ould third Buffs.

Mick Soolivan the shillin' tuck,
An' of coorse I did the same ;
For a boy was killed in faction fight,
An' us got all the blame.

At any rate the Rigmment sailed
To fight in the China war ;
Mick's heart and mine were sick and sore
Fur one last look at Galtimore.

Mick was a rale good fellow,
But obstinate as a mule ;
Faith, I've seen him kick the masther
When he whacked him in the school.

The first rale hard fight that we had
Was in a town they call Paykin,
And Mick up a little dark bye street
By the Chinese was hemmed in.

And there he stood his ground my jewel,
And fought ten up and down,
Till they brought as many Chinamen
As would smother Fion Maccool.

So they tuck the mad white divil
Before their mandarin,
And towld him if he valued life
His nose in the dust put in.

‘ What, put me face in the dirt,
The name of the ould corps sell?
Before Mick Soolivan does it
He ’ll see you all in —— ’


Down came the sword like a flash,
Stopped a heart that never lied,
And there, in that crowd of Chinamen,
Had one of the ould corps died.

How do I know that it happened?
That night we caught a spy,
I was with the provost marshall,
You should hear the poor divil cry.

An' that was the end of Mick Soolivan.
Hand down my pipe from the shelf.
The Chinamen towld us the story his last,
For I hung him next morning myself."


And now the story done again, the loud applause
And shouts of "good" for many minutes
Rung without a pause.
The grim old soldier smiled,
Then with his old abstracted gaze
Resumed his pipe, and stared into the blaze.
Now as the story ends, the door bangs wide,
The sentry's shout of "Guard, turn out."
Fast hurry them outside,
While, to the challenge sharp, "Halt, who comes
there,"
The answer loud and strong, "Grand rounds"
Rings on the midnight air;
"Stand grand rounds" the sentry cries, "and give
the countersign,"
Again in louder thunder tones comes answer,
"Constantine."
The sergeant speaks with subdued tone
While dressing up the line,
And in the deepest darkness shows
Two horsemen's dim outline.

The watchword now exchanged,
And guard found all correct,
The horsemen vanish in the dark,
And on their way direct ;
While now again with laugh and joke
They scramble round the fire,
When, to the sergeant's vigorous poke,
The flames rise higher and higher.
Some time it takes before each one
Is settled in his place, and then to know
Whose turn is next is asked with anxious face ;
That point is soon decided ; the drummer's turn
 has come,
Who quickly rattles through his tale
Like rolling on his drum.
You ne'er would think such sentiment
Within his head was shut,
For features squat and skin more rough
Were never seen on cocoa nut.



THE DRUMMER'S STORY.

“One night, when ’t was late,
There came to the gate
A poor little waif
Who begged for a bed.
Down his poor little face
The tears ran a race,
And his story was sad :
He never had known
A father or mother ;
While he spoke the big sobs
Did his voice almost smother.
So in we took Billy,
For that was his name,
He told us the same,
For he ne’er had another.
He was brought to the fire,
When a big hunch of bread
Satisfied all desire ;



Then we all had a look
At his eyes and his hair ;
The first was bright blue,
While the other was fair.
He looked like thirteen,
And we said, all agreein',
He was meant for a soldier ;
For he slept like a top
Wrapped up in my coat,
Nor woke till reveille
Spoke out its first note.
He was mad with delight
When I gave him my drum,
And my coffee he liked,
With its flavour of rum.
He was liked by us all,
And soon grew so tall,
The curnel one day
Had him put under pay,
So Billy was sent to the drum.

All this happened, you see,
A few months before
We went to the Crimea.
At last came the rout,
'T was received with a shout;
Not a fight had we had,
The boys were all mad
Active service to see,
From the curnel
Right down, mates,
To little Billee.

At last we embarked,
Such cheering was there
And cries of "safe home"
From the hug of the bear.
And when out to sea,
So daring and free,
Little Billy would always
Be on the crosstree.

He caught all the tricks
The sailors could teach,
And hand over hand
The maintop could reach.
The sailors, indeed,
Though he 'd write
And could read,
Thought we brought him up bad ;
In time he 'd improve,
But still it was sad
He could not chew the weed.

Well, to shorten my tale,
We got within hail
And sight of the shore,
Where many a day
In the sun's scorching ray
We lay sick and sore,
Till we made the flank march
To the Alma's hill side,
Where the Muscovite's pride
In the dust was laid low.

In face of the foe
Little Billy did go
Without ever a scratch,
But his coat had a patch
Of every glow
That's in the rainbow.
Well, the worst of the lot
Was not shell or shot,
But the trenches,
Where, up to our knees,
In water we 'd freeze
For two hours or so ;
And pickets outlyin',
Where, though you were dyin',
You dare move a yard
Lest astray you should go.
One night little Billy,
Who was bright as a cricket,
Was sent with his drum
To the most distant picket ;

So he started to go
Right off in the snow.
The sentries that night
Had many a fright,
For they swore they could hear
On the night wind quite clear
The roll of a drum.
I was on the relief
Which went out in the morn,
And the question was asked,
When, true as you 're born,
Billy had never been seen.
We were all nearly mad,
And scoured through the snow
Impatient to know
If footmarks 't would show,
But never a sign.
"Billy," "Billy," cried all,
But like funeral call
On the snow like a pall
Our shouts seemed to fall.

In the height of despair
I was tearing my hair,
When I saw in the snow
Of drum sticks a pair,
And some fifty yard on
Was a drum.
My shout rent the air,
Hurried up all the rest,
Ah! the sight that was there,
For he lay as in sleep
While the stoutest did weep.

* * * *

I hope you 'll excuse,
I 'm foolish and silly,
I can't talk any more, mates,
'Bout poor little Billy."

Upon the finish of the tale
 A solemn silence reigned,
Which was unbroken till the night
 Another hour had gained.
The sergeant's heavy, nodding head
 Had sunk upon his breast,
While stealing slumber weighed upon
 The eyelids of the rest.
The storm outside had ceased to wage
 Its battle with the door,
While to a murmuring monotone,
 Had sunk the flames' loud roar.
The watch has ceased the measured tramp,
 His weary feet to rest ;
While flies his thoughts away to home,
 And those who love him best.
Then well for him if previous life
 A retrospect will bear,
For often by the sentry's side
 Has stalked the spectre, Care.

And he who would his conscience drown,
The paths of glory seek,
Will find in such an hour as this
With triple tongue 't will speak.
Now while one thinks about a friend,
Another of a foe,
A magic sound wakes all to life,
The shout of "Sentry go."
The sergeant springs upon his feet
And rushes to the door,
Where sharp and stern his voice is heard
Above the loud uproar.
He calls to laggard number four,
Whose turn is "for relief,"
In rather Saxon English tones,
But to the point and brief.
Again the fire is made to roar,
New comers take their place,
And when the pipes are charged and lit,
Content is on each face.

Some chaff exchanged, whose witty stream
Is not so deep as broad,
Then cries of "order for a yarn"
All eagerly applaud.
The one who volunteers a tale
The fiddle had been taught
By one on whom a dreadful end
By fate was sternly wrought.
On many a dreary winter's night,
In barrack room and camp,
Had fiddler Smith beguiled the time,
Naught could his spirits damp,
And many a heavy heart was roused
Beneath a coat of red
When from his fiddle came the tones
Which homeward fancy led.
And while he spoke a cold grey light
Shone on the window pane,
Which told another day had come,
The night was on the wane.

FIDDLER SMITH'S STORY.


“The men were all well dressed
Who danced at the ball,
But the fiddler's shirt
Was the whitest of all ;
For his wife had got up
From a sick bed, and starched
And ironed its front,
Though in fever she parched.
For dear to her heart
Was the story when told,
No front white as his,
Though they bore studs of gold.
The guests saw the hungry faced
Absent eyed man
Who rejected the wine,
Though so pale and so wan ;
And whose eyes glared with wild
And unnatural fire,

As the strains of the music
Rose higher and higher.
And the tone of his fiddle,
Oh God, you should hear !
'T was the voice of despair
Which at times struck the ear.
One waltz was a story,
And told a sad tale
Of hearts that were broken—
Its theme was a wail.
And the lover who danced
With his love next his heart,
Drew her closer and vowed
In her ear ne'er to part.
But the poor fiddler's thoughts
Were away in the room
Where a small tallow candle
Illumined the gloom ;
Where his wife sat and crooned
O'er her boy who must die.

This waltz was the tune,
 'T was her best lullaby.
'T was through want of good food
 And plenty of wine,
But a bottle would cost
 At least three and nine.
For the times were so bad,
 And engagements were slack,
And the father had spent
 Six long months on his back.
But to-night a whole guinea
 Was sure to be earned ;
Not for wine, but for morning
 The fiddler's heart yearned.
And when the last dance
 On the programme was played,
How he longed that the words
 " You can go " would be said.
But the host's lovely daughter
 Must have just one waltz more,

THE GUARD ROOM.

And that one the tune
Which the sad story bore.
And again from the fiddle
There came such a tone,
The cornet and harp
Let him play all alone.
It gave them cold shivers,
And made them afraid,
So they went to the room
Where the supper was laid,
Where they ate and they drank
Until both had his fill,
When the fiddler came in,
Looking ghastly and ill.
They pressed him to eat,
The roast beef was so fine,
But no food could he touch,
He but gulped down some wine.
And the cornet now said,
As he made his glass foam,



"However this night

"Are we going to get home.

"No train till eight a.m.,

"The station's not near,

"'T is snowing quite fast,

"And the roads are so queer.

"Let us order a cab,

"I don't think the fare

"Will be more than four bob each,

"And that we can bear?"

But the fiddler protested

Against such nonsense;

He would walk home

Before he would stand such expense.

'T was but eight miles by road,

And but four o'clock now,

He could reach home by six

He was willing to vow.

To spend four bright shillings,

Almost a week's rent,

O no ; far too soon

Will his guinea be spent.

Some good wine for his boy,

And some stout for his wife,

Why, that four bob would buy them

A new lease of life !

Then he drank down some wine,

And quite angry grew,

And declared that to walk

Was what he meant to do.

They laughed in his face,

Said his head was gone wrong ;

There were two streams to cross,

And a moor four miles long ;

While the snow made the fields

And the road look alike ;

While no man could tell

Safe ground from the dyke.

But he swore that with them

No longer he 'd stay,

That he walked it before,
 It was simply child's play.
Then he buttoned his overcoat,
 Scanty and thin,
And tied a poor comforter
 Under his chin.
One more gulp of the wine,
 And a nod of the head,
And he passed out
 Without a God speed you being said.

* * * *

A mother sits crooning
 And watching her boy ;
Oh ! what love like a mother's,
 All gold no alloy.
" He said that for certain
 " The time he could fix,
" If he got done by four
 " He could reach home by six."

It was six o'clock now,
And no step on the stair,
So she went crooning on,—
The sad waltz was the air.
Her boy sleeps at last ;
“O, thank God for a rest,”
And cuddles him closer
Up to her thin breast.
Her poor weary eyes
Can now rest for awhile ;
“He soon will be home,
“It is only eight mile.”
A few minutes pass ;
She awakes with a start,
And looks at her boy's face,
And feels for his heart.
“O, Father in heaven,
“Surely this is not death ?”
But the white limbs grow cold,
And the mouth takes no breath.

* * * *

The man whom a snowstorm
On Blackmoor may tide,
Must have God, or a guide,
Or good luck on his side.
The man who now staggers
But faces the gale
Has the heart of a lion,
Though a cheek ashen pale.
His eyes are now filled
With unnatural light,
For fancy has brought
His poor home to his sight.
And he shouts in delirium,
Facing the blast,
"I come, Kate, I come,
"Here is money at last."
And he raves of his boy,
As he flounders along,

And hums the sad waltz tune,
His wife's favourite song.
He babbles her virtues,
Her goodness and thrift,
Then sinks down and sleeps,
While the snows o'er him drift.

* * * *

She sits and she sings
Through the whole live long day,
But her song never changes
The good nurses say.
She will croon for a while,
Then will say with a smile,
“ He soon will be here,
“ It is only eight mile.” ”

Now at the finish of his tale
The day was shining clear,
And as I've got no more to tell,
I end my story here.
Again I may your time beguile,
And other stories tell,
My time is up, 't is "Sentry go,"
I bid you kind farewell.

FINIS.





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